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A special six-article section of this journal is devoted to the theme of "European Education" (EU): (1) "Reform of EU Educational Policy" (Volker Thomas); (2) "Living in Europe, Working for Europe" (Volker Thomas); (3) "EURES Helps to Find Jobs" (Volker Thomas); (4) "Help for Higher Education Institutions in Central and Eastern Europe" (Siegbert Wuttig); (5) "Europe as an Educational Community" (Brigitte Mohr); (6) "The Principle of Trilinguality" (Hubert Markl). (JRH)

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EUROPEAN EDUCATION

New EU programmes

Europe as an educational community

The principle of trilinguality

Studying in Germany?

Taking out patents on living creatures?

How much mathematics do people really need?

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Drawing by Katrin Karajan, Class 9, Lessing-Gymnasium, for the 1995 European Pupils Competition from Baden-Württemberg

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REFORM OF EU EDUCATION POLICY

New programmes to provide greater mobility

"If I were to set the process of uniting Europe in motion once more, I would start with education," Jean Monnet, the great European, is reported to have once said towards the end of his life about his work devoted to the unification of Europe. Starting with education – in this field too doors have been thrown open following the ratification of the Treaty of Maastricht. The European Union has reformed its education policy, re-organized the programmes and expanded the opportunities of promotion geographically.

Although the new action programmes – scheduled to run to the end of the decade – are based on the successful programmes hitherto, the administration and structure of the current six education programmes are being streamlined. Overall, the EU is making ECU 1.5 billion available for its education policy to the year 1999.

The Socrates programme embraces all sectors of general education and continues the Erasmus student exchange programme. The new programme in the vocation training sector is called Leonardo. And the third phase of the Youth for Europe programme is designed, by means of exchange and encounter, to bring young Europeans more closely together – regardless of training and occupation.

Geographically, the programmes have now been expanded to embrace 15 member states, but also include Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein and provide manifold opportunities of cooperation with Central and East European countries ready to join in.

The reform is by no means just a "face-lift". The steadily growing demands on education and training inside Europe have made streamlining absolutely essential. What is more, since 1 November 1993, there has been a new legal basis for European cooperation, i.e. the Maastricht Treaty. The Union's powers with regard to general and vocational education and new aims are set out in Articles 126 and 127 (see box). General and occupational education and training likewise play a central role in the European Commission's White Book on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment, published in late 1993. Last but not least, with its "European Year for Life-long Learning", the EU intends to focus discussion on further training matters in 1996. The Now or Adapt programmes offer examples of this. Now promotes the re-entry of women into professional life. Adapt supports the retraining of employees whose jobs are threatened long-term by rapid industrial change.

The principle of "Unity in Diversity"

The EU initiative is not aimed at standardizing national education policies or imposing a "European Timetable" on the member states. By its activities, the Community would like to give the various education policies of the member countries a community dimension. Their responsibility for the content and methodical

By means of exchange and encounter, the EU education programmes are designed to bring young Europeans closer together

organization of general and vocational education remains unaffected. There are no aspirations towards a centralized policy; "Unity in Diversity" is the objective.

Commissioner Cresson

Edith Cresson, the former head of the French Government, is responsible for the new education policy. She has been Commissioner for Educational Affairs since January 1995. During her tenure of office – the appointment lasts five years – she has set herself the following tasks:

- the introduction of a system for the recognition of general and vocational skills;
- the promotion and certification of apprentice training at European level;
- and the establishment of a so-called "Second Chance" school designed to facilitate entry into working life for young persons who have dropped out of the classical education system through a period of training in another country.

She has come to realize that the future information and service society will have an enormous impact on professional life. Old ways of thinking – i.e. that initial professional training suffices for a lifetime, must be abandoned. Innovations are called for at all levels of working life – from academic to craftsman.

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Article 126

of the Treaty on European Union defines the aims, names the European dimension of education and delineates the limits of competence. The Community "shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organization of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity."

According to Paragraph 2, the Community's aims are as follows:

- developing the European dimension in education, particularly through the teaching and dissemination of the languages of the Member States;
- encouraging the mobility of students and teachers, inter alia, by encouraging the academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study;
- promoting cooperation between educational establishments;
- developing exchanges of information and experience;
- encouraging the development of distance education.

The Community shall foster cooperation with third countries and international organizations, in particular the Council of Europe.

Article 127

With regard to vocational training policy, Article 127 of the Treaty on European Union, like Article 126, reaffirms the principle of subsidiarity "while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content and organization of vocational training". Community action shall aim to:

- facilitate adaptation to industrial changes, in particular through vocational training and retraining;
- improve initial and continuing vocational training;
- facilitate access to vocational training and encourage mobility of instructors and trainees and particularly young people;
- stimulate cooperation on training between educational and training establishments and firms;
- develop exchanges of information and experience on issues common to the training systems of the Member States.

Consequently, the Brussels programmes are aimed at all persons involved in the working world. Financial assistance from Leonardo or the even better endowed European Social Fund (ESF) no longer flows chiefly into promotional programmes coordinated by the Nuremberg-based Federal Institute of Labour. EU activities are directed at enterprises, trainees, instructors and employees wishing to increase their knowledge in the EU sector. It is enterprises, in particular, which are really beginning to discover the new education programmmes.

The criteria for applicants listed in the "Vademecum" on Leonardo indicate the way in which the European dimension is to be taken into account:

- Projects must be of a cross-border nature – several partners from various EU countries should always be involved.
- The various persons involved in vocational training should cooperate (enterprises, both sides of industry, polytechnics).
- Vocational training should not be specialized, but overlapping.
- Preparation for future training requirements, innovation of training courses and the passing-on of positive experiences to others are to be included as a matter of course.

The programme is accompanied by a committee in which governments and the European social partners are represented on a fifty-fifty basis. National coordination in the Federal Republic of Germany is the responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Technology, and the Federal Institute of Vocational Training (BIBB).

The European Union's image

Forty percent of young persons see possible risks in the single market. Even so, the number of participants in European education and training programmes is growing and growing. Whereas there were a mere 3,500 scholar-

More than 400,000 young people are to take part in the Youth for Europe programme in the next four years.

ship holders taking part in the first year of the Erasmus programme in 1987, the number of students taking advantage of Erasmus promotional assistance in the 1995/96 academic year is over 160,000 (24,000 of whom are Germans). More than 400,000 young persons are to take part in the Youth for Europe programme in the next four years. Europe is booming as far as educational opportunities are concerned.

"Any secondary education is based on the fact that one came far out of oneself to be then able to repossess oneself in a deepened sense," the great educationalist, Eduard Spranger (1882-1963), once said. The new EU programmes are providing the best opportunity for this.

Volker Thomas

1996: THE EUROPEAN YEAR OF LIFE-LONG LEARNING

★★★★★★★★★★★★

Learning and educating oneself throughout one's life: is this possible and, if so, how? These are questions for which answers are to be sought within the framework of the 1996 European Year. Five objectives have been set out in the White Paper "Teaching and learning - along the path to a cognitive society", presented by the Commission in November 1995, to put life-long learning into practice:

1) acquisition of new knowledge is to be promoted
2) schools and firms must come closer together
3) social exclusion must be resisted
4) everyone should master three Community languages
5) investment in education must be promoted.

Following the official opening in Venice on 2 and 3 February, ideas and initiatives are to be encouraged at European, national, regional and local level and implemented.

Finally, all measures are to be harmonized at the closing conference in Dublin in December 1996.

LIVING IN EUROPE, WORKING FOR EUROPE

An overview of the European Union's education programmes

The Treaty of Maastricht has extended the European Union's powers in the education sector. Whereas the focus has been on universities so far, the opportunities have now been extended to include vocational training and school programmes.

"The European dimension is to be promoted in the classroom," was the way Axel Bunz, head of the European Commission in Germany, put it. In addition, the teaching of foreign languages is to be supported and developed at all educational levels.

The promotional measures address more people; they are accessible to an increased number of groups. In the 1995/96 academic year, a good 160,000 students enjoyed the benefit of an Erasmus scholarship. To this must be added the exchange of 18,000 lecturers and the promotion of joint research projects. More than 1,700 higher education institutions have joined forces in cooperation programmes within the Erasmus framework. Together with Socrates, the "academic net" boasts 22,000 universities. Even in the 1993/94 academic year, the number of persons taking advantage of the student exchange programme came to 112,000, of whom 12,000 were German.

The Leonardo programme embraces the vocational training and further training sector. Anyone outside school, university and training centre desirous of getting to know Europe, will undoubtedly find something suitable in the Youth for Europe programme.

The fourth framework programme is aimed at the promotion of research. Here, the European Union, by means of its own research and technology programmes, is helping to safeguard Europe as an economic location.

Socrates

The Socrates framework programme embraces all actions within the general education sector and is carrying on the student exchange programme, Erasmus, of the first generation. Socrates is divided into three sectors:

1) Higher education
2) Schools
3) Special assistance for foreign-language teaching, and the promotion of communication technologies and learning methods.

The programme has a budget of ECU 850 million, i.e. DM 1.6 billion, for the next five years. Of this sum, 55% is for higher education institutions and student exchange, 10% for schools and 25% for foreign languages and distance studies.

The long-term objective in student exchange via Erasmus, which is now included in the Socrates basic programme, is that at least 10% of all European students study for one semester abroad. It was nearly 6% in 1995. Some 22,000 universities participated in the Erasmus cooperation among universities in 1995.

What must now be taken note of?

Students wishing to study in another EU member state must first find out whether and what cooperation schemes there are at their native university. As a rule, only three conditions have to be fulfilled by applicants:

- They must be registered at a higher education institution,
- offer proof of health insurance and
- offer proof of the ability to support themselves financially.

The most important point: odd-jobbing is permitted and does not require a work permit. Students are free to choose the place they want to study. Spouses – regardless of nationality – and children are also issued with residence permits.

A residence permit is valid for the length of the training concerned, but can be extended as often as desired.

Financial assistance, such as a scholarship or BafoG (German federal government support) for studies abroad is available, but there is no automatic entitlement to such assistance.

Admission to the desired higher education institution takes place in accordance with national or individual university requirements. Entrance examinations are compulsory in quite a few countries and many a university invites applicants to an interview to get to know them better. Basically, the principle of equal treatment prevails for native and foreign students. The recognition of university entrance qualifications was regulated by the European Convention on the Equivalence of University Entrance Qualifications on 11 December 1953 and takes place without problem in most cases. As a general rule, study attainments achieved in other EU member states, are recognized in the student's own country.

Leonardo

... addresses young employees and trainees wishing to obtain experience of other countries through training periods abroad and to improve their knowledge of foreign languages. By means of Leonardo, vocational training schools, further training institutions and firms are to develop new and further training programmes of a cross-border nature, referred to as transnational projects. Exchange projects are offered for teachers, vocational school pupils and young gainfully-employed persons.

Leonardo is continuing and supplementing the Petra (initial trade training), Force (vocational further training) and Euro-Tecnet (innovative teaching methods) programmes, as well as the former Comett programme (cross-border training partnerships between higher education institutions and commercial/industrial concerns).

The Leonardo programme also supports cooperation throughout Europe and the exchange of experiences by vocational training experts, as well as analyses and surveys of the labour market. A budget of ECU 670 million, i.e. DM 1.1 billion, has been scheduled to the end of 1999 for this programme.

Youth for Europe

... is based on the principle: "Acquaintance is the best antidote to racism and hostility to foreigners". Youth for Europe is open to all young persons between the ages of 15 and 25 residing in the EU. Youth exchange with third countries, which do not belong to the EU, is also to be given support. This is particularly designed to provide those young persons with an opportunity who do not fulfil the requirements for access to the other EU education programmes. Promotion is to be forthcoming, first and foremost, for projects conceived and organized by young people themselves – creativeness and personal initiative are called for here.

The following activities are eligible for promotional assistance:

- ▶ Youth-initiative projects, international youth encounters and practical training within the EU.
- ▶ Concomitant programmes for youth welfare officers.
- ▶ Youth exchange with countries which are not members of the EU (third countries).
- ▶ Research work in the youth sector to provide better analysis and registration of young people's needs and expectations.

Youth for Europe is run on a decentralized basis in the individual member states. The exchange programme for young Europeans entered the third round in 1995. 400,000 young persons and youth officers will be able to take part in the programme over the next five years.

Research promotion

... is the fourth framework programme (running from 1994 to 1998). The European dimension in research and technology has become a question of survival for the European economy. Consequently, the EU provides assistance with its own research and technology programmes to safeguard Europe's position as an economic location. Information and telecommunication technology, industrial technologies, environmental research and climatology, biotechnology, biomedical research, energy research, transport and socio-economic research, and assessment of technological consequences stand to the fore.

Financial assistance is only forthcoming for research projects carried out on the basis of international cooperation between industrial, university and independent research laboratories involving at least two partners from different member states. Exclusively scientific/technical quality is the decisive selection criterion. Consideration is only given to projects in the basic research and the pre-competitive sectors. Agreements are concluded directly between the European Commission and the applicants.

Volker Thomas

EURES HELPS TO FIND JOBS

A French brewery is looking for a specialist for the production of light beers, a German computer expert would like to work in Britain for a few years. No problem with the Eures (European Employment Services) information system.

By means of this new system, the EU Commission in Brussels wants to promote an inter-country employment exchange within the EU. The Federal Institute of Labour, Nuremberg, was also recently affiliated and now provides the job centres and advisers with access to the central data bank in Brussels and Luxembourg.

Eures is designed to enable the 128 million employees in the 15 EU states to really exercise the right to freedom of movement and residence. Some 400 advisers (31 in Germany) have been specially trained to provide interested persons with information on the working and living conditions in the various countries. This service is free of charge for users.

The new information system will enhance the transparency of the European labour market and have offers available for job-seekers – from Norway to Spain. In this context, it is not to be merely a matter of specific trades such as the building industry – the classical field for a genuinely realized Europeanization of the labour market. The aim is to make offers available to highly-qualified employees, self-employed persons and academics. To date, the offers made by Eures have been focused on offers of an international nature: tourism, hotel industry, engineering.

In this connection, despite mutual recognition of diplomas and professional qualifications, and the transparency of education and further education institutions, there is still some way to go before all obstacleshave been overcome. As the regulation and organization of scholastic and vocational education and training are exclusively the concern of the individual member states, the European Union cannot, in the final analysis, bring about harmonization of content and qualifications. It simply lacks the authority to do so – even after the Treaty of Maastricht.

One course chosen involved the elaboration of directives for specific professions such as doctors, veterinary surgeons, nurses, midwives and dispensing chemists. But this path to harmonization of content turned out to be too difficult.

Consequently, the EU applies the basic principle of mutual trust: a course of professional training in another EU state is basically recognized if it entitles the person concerned to practise this profession in his/her own country, and if the successfully completed training there differs very little in essence from that of the country in which this professonal activity is to commence. Should this not be the case, however, an aptitude test or an adaptation course can be demanded.

Directives only apply to reglemented, academic professions, i.e. professions for which a diploma (degree) or another form of qualification is required, such as in the case of teachers, judges, lawyers and engineers.

There are no valid guidelines for all other occupations although there is an office in each country which, for example, helps employers to assess qualifications or certificates from another country. In Germany, the Berlin-based Centre for the Promotion of Vocational Training (Cedefop), has elaborated "equivalence guidelines" by means of which the individual vocational qualifications for all EU states can be compared. These lists are of a strictly informative nature and are in no way binding. Most chambers of industry and commerce, as well as handicraft chambers, are in possession of these lists.

Higher education qualifications are mutually recognized as long as the length of course of study preceding them is not less than three years. This is laid down in a new directive on the recognition of higher education diplomas (degrees) which took effect in January 1991. This has provided considederable relief although some questions still remain open. There is still no general system for the recognition of individual study achievements, e.g. an intermediate examination. If individual training courses are not comparable, the country concerned can demand an aptitude test or additional course.

Mobility, experience of other countries and knowledge of foreign languages will also be an asset for all applicants. But the new opportunities which Europe offers for school, apprenticeship and study can only be taken advantage of by personal effort. A French lawyer must grapple with a very different legal system from the German. Anyone au fait with both, for instance – maybe as a result of the courses of study followed – has automatically better prospects when applying for a job in an international concern.

Volker Thomas

Personal initiative, mobility, experience of other countries and knowledge of foreign languages will also be an advantage for job-seekers in the future. Here is the notice board at Berlin Technical University.

The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) is an establishment set up jointly by the higher education institutions in Germany. Its mandate is the promotion of higher education relations with other countries, particularly through the exchange of students, graduates and academics. The promotional assistance provided addresses foreign academics, university teachers and students of all faculties. The DAAD has the following tasks:

- the award of scholarships for the promotion of training and further training or research projects to foreign and German students, young academics and university teachers from all faculties,
- the placement and promotion of German academic staff from all faculties as short or long-term lecturers (including lecturers on German language, literature and background studies) at foreign higher education institutions,
- the provision of information on study and research opportunities in Germany and other countries,
- the after-care of former scholarship holders, especially abroad, through re-invitations, post-care events and publications.

The EU programmes, Erasmus and Lingua, represent a special variation of structured mobility programmes. They award scholarships to students at German universities. In the case of both of these – as also in the case of the EU programmes, Comett and Tempus – the DAAD has assumed the responsibility for a national information and advisory office. In all probability, the DAAD will perform the same duties in the case of the EU programmes, Socrates and Leonardo, which will carry on the afore-mentioned programmes. The work performed by the DAAD is financed first and foremost by the Foreign Office. The second most important source of financial support comes from the Federal Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Technology.

HELP FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

The Tempus programme is promoting reform and student exchange

Ever since the change of system in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989, the European Union has comitted itself to the renewal of the higher education systems in the former East Bloc countries.

Taking "Help through Cooperation" as its motto, the EC launched its mobility programme, Tempus (Trans-European Mobility Programme for University Studies), in 1990. This programme provides higher education institutions in Albania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia with the opportunity to cooperate with partners from the EU, higher education institutions and firms, and to exchange staff and students. Brussels made ECU 517 million available for this purpose for the period 1990-1995.

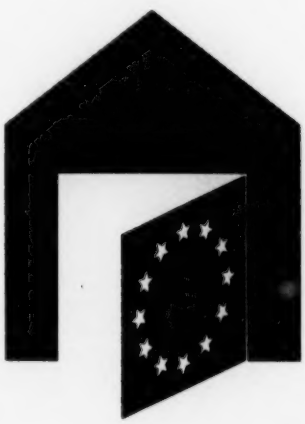
In each case, joint cross-border cooperation projects (called Joint European Projects, or JEPS, for short) represent the basis for financial assistance. By means of these projects, the training and further training of "human resources", central to the reform process, are to be accelerated and specific structural developments in Central and Eastern Europe promoted.

Quite a few of the JEPS (known as "Structure JEPS") are aimed at the development or restructuring of university administrations, or at the improved cooperation of higher education institutions with the local economy, e.g. in the further training sector. Other partnerships are intent on creating new courses of study or completely new faculties, or restructuring existing ones. Others (known as "Mobility JEPS") are setting up networks for student exchange.

To date, the Tempus programme has a respectable balance-sheet to offer – quantitatively and qualititatively. In the period 1995/96 alone, a total of 486 JEPs (running for the most part for three years) are receiving financial support from the EU.

At its 6th Tempus annual conference in Oldenburg, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), which acts as the national information and advisory agency for Tempus in Germany, presented a very positive picture of German participation in this programme: 173 German higher education institutions, firms and organizations are taking part in 241 (i.e. almost 50%) of the overall 486 cooperation projects. Only British institutions are more frequently involved in the JEPs.

In the newly-approved JEPs, the partner countries of German institutions are chiefly Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria. The majority of projects with German participation are being carried out in the "Applied Sciences" (engineering, environmental conservation, computer science), natural science, economics and the social sciences.



During the annual conference, the DAAD also discussed the contribution content-wise of various Tempus projects devoted to the reform process in Central and Eastern Europe. In this context, it emerged that Tempus was making substantial financial help available for higher education institutions (between ECU 400,000 and 500,000 per project over a period of three years) and that, as a result, it had proved possible to realize many projects on administrative reform, curricula development and the exchange of students and academics. Thus, the individual higher education institutions in Central and Eastern Europe were enjoying the benefits of these projects, and were also being given support in the equipment sector.

The significance of Tempus as an economic and modification factor can be measured by the fact that quite a few higher education institutions were involved in almost 30 projects during the course of the current programme (e.g. Gdansk Technical University, Poland and Budapest Technical University, Hungary). In some countries, almost half the universities are taking part in Tempus (e.g. the Czech Republic).

More than a few Tempus projects have been effective far beyond the confines of the individual higher education institutions. It proved possible, for instance, to develop a computer-supported budget administration programme for Polish higher education institutions. In the joint projects with 11 Romanian higher

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Crossing the border is part of everyday life at the Viadrina University in Frankfurt-on-Oder. A third of the students come from Poland.

education institutions, help was given in the setting up of lecture courses. More than a few curricular development projects are acting as a model for future projects (e.g. development of an integrated course of study in civil engineering with the Czech Republic and Poland).

The successes achieved by Tempus so far seem to largely confirm the EU's intention to set up an effective supporting programme for higher education reform in the countries eligible for financial assistance. But can the conclusion now be drawn that the programme has served its purpose and can be terminated?

Politically, the EU has always regarded the Tempus programme as a time-limited contribution to reform. In its resolution in April 1993, the Council of the European Communities laid down the period 1994-98 as the second phase of the Tempus programme. In addition, within the context of the political efforts to integrate the associated Central and East European countries (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia) into the EU, it was decided in principle to let these countries take part in EU programmes. The opening-up has already been provided for in the Council's resolutions on the new EU education projects, Leonardo, Socrates and Youth for Europe.

Before Erasmus students can be sent to Prague or Budapest, however, there are still a few problems to be solved, such as the financing of the Central and East European countries' participation, the lack of reciprocity in student exchange, the too low a provision of scholarships and the question of academic recognition, for example. Even so, the first modest attempts can be expected in 1996/97.

Siegfried Baatz in Die Welt

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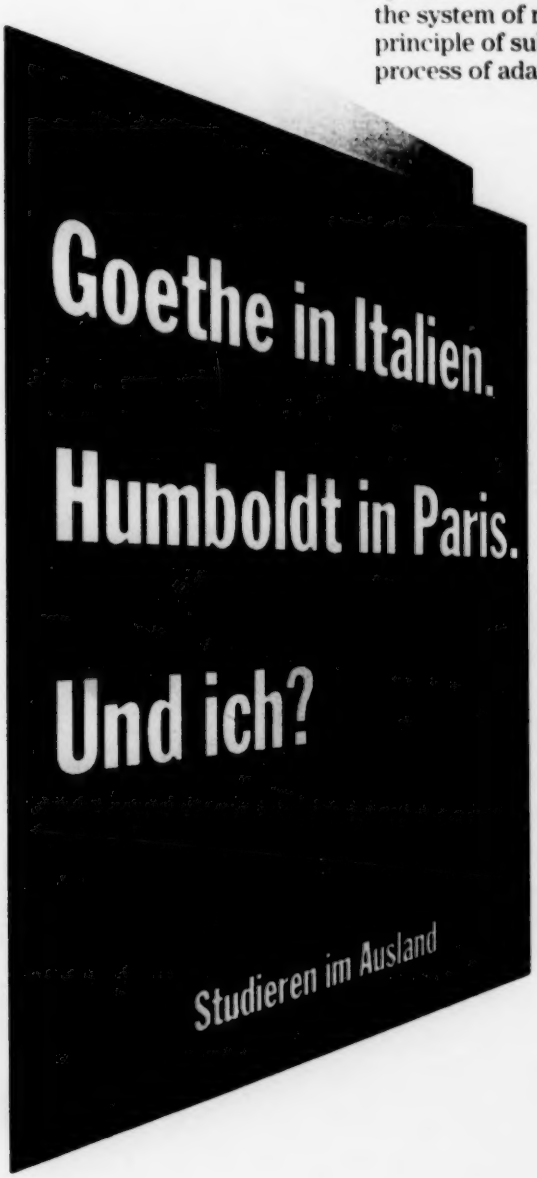
EUROPE AS AN EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY

Is there such a thing as a European education policy? Not yet. Is there to be one? If the EU Commission in Brussels has its way, the answer is yes. But will the member states go along with this? Are they not all proud of their own, deeply, rooted education systems and is no way prepared to adapt to the system of neighbouring countries? The principle of subsidiarity is hampering the process of adaptation.



A European education community? That's still a long way off. Yet this once existed in the Middle Ages. In the 15th century, during the age of the great humanist, Erasmus of Rotterdam – whose name was given to the EC higher education exchange programme – the common use of Latin enabled students to move from the University of Coimbra in Portugal to Heidelberg or Prague, for instance – and with fewer problems of recognition than present-day Erasmus students. But not only academics, but also journeymen, artists and merchants strayed across frontiers, and probably in greater numbers than today. In subsequent centuries, when French and Italian architects built palaces in St. Petersburg, Copenhagen or Munich, they undoubtedly brought their masons, plasterers, sculptors and joiners with them. Catherine the Great, tsarina of Russia, who was a princess from the minor German state of Anhalt-Zerbst, not only invited large numbers of German peasants, but also German teachers, doctors and merchants to come to Russia. These few examples should give us food for thought. In the final analysis, was the much-exhorted mobility of today not better in times gone by? What is impeding mobility – without which Europe cannot function as an economic community?

B&W

First and foremost, the tiresome problems of recognition. These, in turn, result from the differences in the various systems. Wherever one looks – school education, vocational training, higher education – nothing is comparable. Even so, on the strength of the European Council Convention of 1953, final secondary school certificates, giving general right of access to university, are mutually recognized – despite undoubtedly glaring differences in standard. The situation is much worse with regard to vocational qualifications. The training of future skilled workers takes place in very different ways: at schools in most countries or simply "learning by doing", to coin a modern German phrase. Only Germany, Austria and Switzerland (the last-named is not a member state) have the "dual system" (the interlinking of firm and vocational school). Since comparability is not possible, a precise job-description is proposed, to at least make qualifications acquired more transparent for future employers.

According to an EU directive of 1988, provided a course of study of no less than three years has been completed, higher education qualifications are recognized among member states "on the basis of mutual trust", as it states hopefully. Typically, it was the economics ministers who pushed this directive through. The education ministers would scarcely have been able to achieve this as the types of higher education institution and study structures vary from country to country. In this context, this directive is only concerned with "academic recognition", and even this is not without its problems. Even Erasmus students complain that their native university often refuses to recognize the period of study abroad. The Commission is now preparing a further directive designed to safeguard the "professional recognition" of final higher education qualications. This is important because the powerful professional associations in the individual countries frequently prevent foreigners from pursuing their profession. The second and possibly main obstacle to mobility is the inadequate knowledge of foreign languages. Without such knowledge it is nearly impossible to live and work in a neighbouring country. According to the ideas of the EU Commission, and also the wishes of the German education ministers, all EU citizens should learn two foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue. But this is out of the question. A survey of the state of German working persons' knowledge of foreign languages was carried out by the Federal Institute of Vocational Training in 1993. The findings were shattering. Only 36% of West Germans said that they had mastered a foreign language well enough to be able to carry on discussions or correspond. This figure was only 12% among East Germans. The same survey was also carried out in other member states. In comparison, the Germans come off fairly favourably. Only the Luxembourgers, Danes and Dutch thought they had a better knowledge of foreign languages than the Germans. In other words, a largely lanuageless Europe? In the meantime, all children at German secondary schools now learn a foreign languge, mainly English, but relatively few manage to learn two or three foreign languages. The EU Lingua programme, which is designed to promote the acquisition of a foreign language through exchange visits, is too poorly endowed and can only benefit a few thousand young persons and would-be foreignlanguage teachers. Like the Erasmus higher education programme, this is now to be carried out under the Socrates umbrella programme.

For the first time since the Maastricht Treaty, the Commission has now been given authority in the general education sector. The dawn of a European education policy? The programme is called Comenius by means of which partnerships between schools in three member states in each case are to be promoted. But the funds allocated to Comenius are no more than a minor incentive. They are by no means adequate for the 70 million pupils in the EU member states. At the insistence of the member states, the Treaty of Maastricht stipulates that the Commission in Brussels may only be active in a "subsidiary" manner, i.e. if member states are unable to realize certain projects by their own efforts. That this remains so is being particularly monitored by the constituent states in the Federal Republic of Germany, fearing for their "cultural sovereignty". Is this fear of Brussels centralism unfounded? A "European dimension", stated Jacques Delors, long-serving president of the Commission, must permeate all levels of education. This sounds plausible and could be the beginning of a genuine education community. Europe must not become a "Europe of tiny minds". But, as ever, it is economic considerations which, in the final analysis, tip the scales. In the Commission's White Paper on "Growth, Competitiveness, Employment", there is a chapter on the "Adaptation of the Education Systems". Here, we read that training is "the instrument of an active labour-market policy" and, as a consequence, must "now proceed to an adaptation of the European education and training system". How is this to happen? By "generally introducing in all member states" the "best method" which has proved successful in one member state. This would, indeed, constitute a European education policy. To date, however, not one member state seems inclined to submit to the adaptation pressure coming from Brussels.

Brigitte Mohr

THE PRINCIPLE OF TRILINGUALITY

About the only thing young German, French, Irish or Portuguese persons growing up today can know for certain about their future is this: it will be different, in many respects from what they are experiencing today, let alone from what their parents have been able to tell from their own experience. They know that progressing European unity will, in many ways, provide the main terms of reference in this connection, that keen competition in an interlaced global economy will remain the major driving force for the inexorable process of change, and that they will definitely not be able to avoid or escape it.

Consequently, the first demand must be education suited to all Europeans, one which teaches them to think for themselves. Thus, apart from imparting the mother tongue, and providing a basic grounding in mathematics and natural science, a good European school must also teach pupils the history and diversity of their own regional, national and pan-European culture, in which, as I see it, the content should be more than just history pure and simple. No less important are the fundamental principles underlying the political, economic and legal systems.

Since, however, the diversity of European cultures is too great to familiarize every European pupil with them to any appreciable extent – we shall undoubtedly soon have twenty major and even more minor languages with their wealth of literature and history to contend with in the European Union – a further principle of European education will have to become effective, i.e. the principe of trilinguality. Although this has long proved successful in small European countries, it is unfortunately grossly neglected in the larger ones. All European pupils should learn at least three languages during their time at school – undoubtedly more or less perfectly, i.e. their mother tongue, English, the global lingua franca, and a further European language. The third language can be a matter of personal choice, depending on regional affinities, the opportunities with regard to the availability of training courses and entirely in line with desire and inclination. As a result, generations of young persons will grow up in a united Europe who will be able to reproduce and use the colourful mixture of European languages, both minor and major. Thus the current practice of restricting language teaching to the mother tongue and possibly English should be abandoned. A fluent knowledge of a third lingua franca can challenge the monopoly of English, fine though the latter may be, as the link between nations.

Let no one say too much is being asked. It should be possible here to learn what almost every child in countless nations on earth – from India to Black Africa, from Scandinavia or Benelux to Switzerland – is able to learn, and in many cases without ever attending school. The path to this end is clear: learning a language must start at an early stage, even in the initial years at school, and practised within the context of practical, i.e. realistic, usage.

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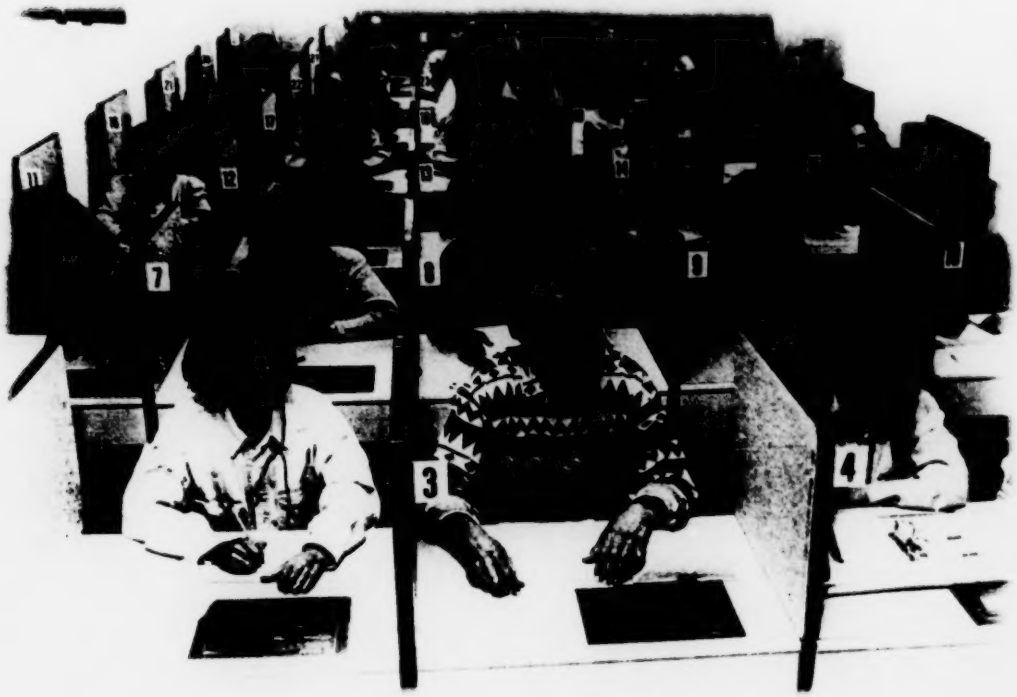

If linguistic versatility is developed consistently at school, it will accelerate and deepen Europeanization.

With advancing years and adequate talent, this also undoubtedly means that many more children than at present will spend some time at least once a year in a European country speaking another language – the country of their third choice of language – to learn to speak it fluently and to understand it. If this could be achieved step by step up to *Abitur* (university entrance qualification) for at least one-third of European pupils – what a Europe of common thought and action based on a common language this would be!

It should likewise be obvious that the so-called "semester abroad", or rather the "European inland semester", would become a matter of course for almost all students in the European Union. This will be easier to achieve if an adequate number of student hostels are made available and if, above all, it is taken for granted that university teachers at European higher education institutions are freely recruited from all over Europe and beyond.

We are making positive progress in this direction. A microbiologist from Britain, a biochemist from Italy (who lived for a long time in Sweden), several Austrian colleagues and another from as far away as Argentinia are all working in my laboratory. But this path must be further pursued. Linguistic versatility developed resolutely at school will help accelerate and deepen the Europeanization process.

Hubert Markl/Die Zeit
(Zoologist Hubert Markl is president of the Max Planck Society)